

CHAMBERS' EDINBURGH JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, EDITORS OF 'CHAMBERS'S INFORMATION FOR THE PEOPLE,' 'CHAMBERS'S EDUCATIONAL COURSE,' &c.

No. 203. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1847.

PRICE 1½d.

A DAY IN YARROW.

'I HOPE the weather will hold up—it looks a little gloomy; and if the rain should come down on the open calash'—

'Don't speak of it. The glass is rising in a very determined-looking way. As for these clouds—pooh! we have always plenty of them sailing about the sky; they are as good as a parasol, and we should feel uncomfortably hot in Scotland without them. Ah, there they go, floating along the heavens, breaking into fantastic groups, and thinning off beautifully to the east. Keep your mind easy: there will be no rain—not a drop.'

It is not difficult to persuade a party going on a pleasure trip that they are to have surprisingly fine weather. My complimentary observations on Scotch clouds were therefore considered quite satisfactory by the English members of the expedition: and so off we set from Edinburgh, a happy little band of tourists. The horses bounded on their way, as if anxious, like everybody else, to get out of town. We soon left Braid Hills and the Pentlands behind; and the blue mountains of the south rose in tumultuary masses on the horizon.

Proud as a Scotsman is of his clouds, with their occasionally glowing and varied tints, he could at times be persuaded to give away a few of them, or to take blue sky in exchange; but nothing could induce him to part with a single hill, glen, loch, river, or burnie. Nature has given him all these to keep and love, and he has loved them so strongly, that for generations without number he has fought for them, and sung songs about them, and they have been to him things which he is never tired of visiting and expatiating upon. Some districts of Scotland, however, are more beloved than others. Hills, and valleys, and streams are not in themselves objects of veneration: that which imparts to them unspeakable charms, is an association with the moving events of history, with the lives of distinguished men, with circumstances over which poetry has bewitchingly thrown her mantle. The district which commands a large share of this enshrined reverence is a tract comprehending the vales of Tweed and Yarrow—the classic ground of Scotland, as one may call it—a scene of natural beauties—a spot where much of the simplicity of ancient manners still exists, along with the thriving industry of modern innovation—the country of

'Green hills and waters blue,
Gray plaids and tarry woo.'

Tourists and travellers, ye are not wise to rush past this pleasing bit of auld Caledonia! Edinburgh for fine houses, the Hiellands for grand scenery, but if you have a soul for the poetic and classic, take a range through

the land of Scott and Hogg—loiter among the hills, and vales, and by the water sides of Peebles, Selkirk, and Roxburgh shires. Thither we are now bound. We are going to my own dear river the Tweed.

At the very starting from Edinburgh—face straight south—we traverse scenes rich in historical association—the heights of Braid, on which James IV. marshalled his forces, the flower of Scotland, before setting out for Flodden—the plains of Roslin, where the heroes in 'ye times of old' rolled back the tide of English invasion. Now clothed in the rich abundance of autumn, these plains are succeeded by the high grounds which bound the vale of the Lothians; and then do we enter on the pastoral region, which spreads away in successive ranges of round swelling hills to the Borders. Leaving the land of coal-pits, limekilns, and highly-cultured fields, we drop down upon a scene of Arcadian sweetness, in the midst of which we come to the pretty little town of Peebles, embowered among wood-clad heights; and there, flowing by its side, we catch the first glance of the pure and sparkling Tweed. It may be partiality; but somehow we have never seen any stream at home or abroad half so 'bonny' as this river. For one thing, the Tweed is left what nature made it. Its waters are 'never drunly.' From top to bottom it runs over its original and appropriate bed of rounded pebbles—some of them white 'candies,' which you can see as clearly at a depth of a dozen feet as if they lay scattered around you. Then the banks are all grassy. Green herbage, and wee white gowans, and heather-bells, and 'siller saughs wi' downy buds' adorn its margin. At one place we have a haugh, on which cattle are seen luxuriantly ruminating; next we have clumps of trees—a policy—amidst which stands a modern mansion; and last of all, at a great many turnings, we come upon the spectral gray ruin of an old Border keep, whose walls, harder than the rock on which they are perched, bid defiance alike to time and tempest. What volumes of stories could be told about these curious old castles!

One of them, Neidpath Castle, is associated with my remembrance from the days of infancy. There, just a mile above Peebles, on a precipitous knoll overhanging the river, it stands as I used to see it forty years ago—mirrored, with its bartizan and wallflowers, on the surface of the waters—unchangeable. Generation after generation for ages has looked on that gaunt apparition: all are gone, and yet it remains; and who can doubt that it will remain when we and many generations after us are swept into eternity? Flesh and blood, what poor weak things ye are! With all your craft and pretensions, stone and lime keep the stage long after you have disappeared! And no wonder. The walls of Neidpath are twelve feet thick; and one shudders as he is conducted through the dungeons, impenetrable to the light of day, albeit the keeper, in her

good-humoured Doric, reminds you that there is now nothing in the world to fear. By way, however, of letting her visitors know what sort of social economy used to prevail langsyne—expecting of course that we should all be very thankful that we did not live five hundred years ago—she relates the tragedy of a poor man having been confined in one of the cells till he died of hunger: ‘and there,’ she adds, pointing to a stone, ‘was the puir gangrel body found wi’ his fingers half eaten off—ah, it was an awfu’ like thing!’ Quite true, my good woman—a very ‘awfu’ like thing:’ we are well rid of ‘auld langsyne.’

Below Peebles, the valley of the Tweed is adorned with many thriving plantations, and assumes the softness of an Italian landscape. Here also the mansions of the ‘lairds’ improve in general character, giving token of a substantial resident proprietor. While driving on our way through this sylvan district, let us recall an anecdote of a family whose residence is in the neighbourhood.

One fine summer day—two hundred years ago—as Murray, the laird of Blackbarony, was strolling down the brae from his house, he saw the laird of Hayston, mounted on a white pony, approaching as if with the intention of visiting his mansion. After the usual greetings, Murray asked Hayston if that was his intention. ‘Deed it’s just that,’ quoth Hayston; ‘and I’ll tell you my errand. I am goun to court your daughter Jean.’ At any other time Murray would have had no objection to the visit; but at present, he had his own reasons for declining the honour—the truth being, that Jean’s only pair of shoes were at the mending. He accordingly gave the thing the go-by, by saying that his daughter was too young for the laird. ‘E’en’s you like,’ said Hayston, who was somewhat darty, and thereupon took an unceremonious leave of Blackbarony, hinting that his visit perhaps would be more acceptable somewhere else. Blackbarony went home, and immediately told his wife what had passed. Her ladyship, on a moment’s reflection, seeing the advantage that was thus likely to be lost in the establishment of her daughter, and to whom the disparity of years was no objection, immediately exclaimed, ‘Are ye daft, laird? Gang awa’ immediately, and call Hayston back again.’ On this the laird observed, ‘Ye ken, my dear, Jean’s shoon are at the mending.’ ‘Hoot awa, sic nonsense,’ says her ladyship; ‘I’ll lend her mine.’ ‘And what’ll ye do yourself?’ ‘Do,’ says the considerate dame; ‘I’ll put on your boots. I’ve lang petticoats, and they’ll never be noticed. Rin and cry back the laird.’ Blackbarony was at once convinced by the reasoning and ingenuity of his wife; and as Hayston’s pony was none of the fleetest, Blackbarony had little difficulty in overtaking him, and persuading him to turn again, the laird having really conceived an affection for his neighbour’s daughter. The visit was paid; Jean was introduced in her mother’s shoes; the boots were never noticed; and the wedding took place in due time, and was celebrated with all the mirth and jollity usually displayed on such occasions. The union turned out happily, and from it are sprung and lineally descended the family of Hayston. Such is an old-world story of Tweedside.

At six miles below Peebles we arrive at Innerleithen—the St Ronan’s, as it is alleged, of Scott; here the soft and more charming scenery ceases, and then comes a tract, all about Elibank, brown and pastoral: sheep dotting the hills—little tributary glens, solitary and seemingly out of the world, yet not disconnected altogether with human weal and wo; for in a bend of the

hill stands a lowly thatched ‘bigging,’ exactly the sort of cot that turned out a Buchanan and a Burns, and, we will be bound to say, inhabited by a decent, God-fearing family.

Crossing the Tweed by a bridge at Innerleithen, we are close upon Traquair, but turning to the left, we in the meanwhile pursue our way down the right bank of the river to Elibank—an old castle and a modern mansion. Traditional legends, the subjects of ballads, here also. But these were not our aim. We came by invitation to have a ramble down to Ashiestiel and all ‘thereaway,’ with the promise to boot, if we had a mind, of peeping into a grouse pie. Such a day! Scene—the sun shining gaily overhead—brown heathy hills all around—a party from whom bursts of merriment go sounding down the valley—and at intervals, if you chose to listen, the gush of the Tweed heard from amongst the greenwood. A mile or two below Elibank, we arrive at the mansion of Ashiestiel, where Scott spent some of the happiest years of his life, and wrote some of his most pleasing poems. Situated in what was formerly a part of Ettrick Forest, and still popularly known by that name, though scarcely a vestige of the old timber remains, the poet’s descriptions convey a vivid picture of the spot:—

‘The scenes are desert now, and bare,
Where flourished once a forest fair,
When these waste glens with copse were lined,
And peopled with the hart and hind.
Yon thorn, perchance, whose prickly spears
Have fenced him for three hundred years,
While fell around his green compeers—
Yon lonely thorn, would he could tell
The changes of his parent dell,
Since he, so gray and stubborn now,
Waved in each breeze a sapling bough:
Would he could tell how deep the shade
A thousand mingled branches made;
How broad the shadows of the oak,
How clang the rovan to the rock,
And through the foliage shod his bend,
With narrow leaves and berries red;
What pines on every mountain sprang,
O’er every dell what birches hung,
In every breeze what aspens shook,
What alders shaded every brook!
“Here in the shade,” methinks he’d say,
“The mighty stag at noontide lay;
The wolf I’ve seen, a fiercer game
(The neighbouring dingle bears his name),
With lurching step around me prowl,
And stop, against the moon to howl;
The mountain boar, on battle set,
His tusks upon my stem would whet;
While doe, and roe, and red-deer good,
Have bounded by, through gay greenwood.”’

Following the course of the river downwards, the banks close in at Yair, where

‘Scarce can the Tweed his passage find;’

and returning from this spot, we arrived at Elibank, where we spent a most agreeable afternoon. But it was necessary we should be on our way; and where should we all pass the night? How nicely some things in this queer world come about! Our calash is bowling along. A field with reapers is in sight.

‘Capital stooks these—what a harvest there will be this year! Let us have a look at what is going on.’

And just as the carriage stops, the master of the reapers heaves in sight.

‘As I’m a living man that’s my old friend, the farmer of —. Here he comes.’

‘No possible!’ cries the farmer, as he approaches, surprised with the spectacle of a parcel of Edinburgh acquaintances in the Forest.

‘Quite possible; here we are on our way to Tibby Shiels’s for the night. How far, ken ye, is it to Tibby’s?’

'Tibby Shiels! Ye's no gang a fit to Tibby's the nicht. It'll warrant it's sixteen miles to Tibby's; and it'll be dark afore ye get frae among the hills. Na, na; ye maun 'a tak a bed at Juniper Bank. What wad the guidwife say if she kenned ye gaed past the door?'

'But look at all these ladies!'

'Houts, never mind; we've plenty up-pittin' for the hale o' ye. And the leddies, I'm thinkin', will be the maist welcome. Weel, what a strange thing to meet you here!'

Who could resist such persuasives? The preliminaries were speedily settled. We sorned during the night at our friend's house. I think we got to bed somewhere about twelve o'clock, after a tremendous amount of talking—the ladies entertaining the guidwife with town news, and the guidman, whose farm was half pastoral, giving me such an insight into the subject of sheep, lambs, dinnonts, wethers, hirsels, wool, shepherds, and colliers, that I almost felt inclined to pitch pen and paper to the dogs, and take up the trade of store farmer.

The sheep-farming of the south of Scotland—to give form to our gossip on the subject—is a peculiar sort of thing, and is carried on over an extensive region, by rather a peculiar sort of people. If anybody has a notion of buying land, I should by all means recommend him to get hold of a cluster of Scotch hills. There they are the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; needing no enclosing, fencing, building, draining, or any other processes which pick the pockets of ordinary landed proprietors. Snow, rain, and sunshine are their sole appliances, and these nature bounteously imparts. Nor have the tenant farmers any heavy responsibilities. A considerable number of the farms are conducted entirely by resident shepherds, the master possibly living fifty miles off, and only requiring to visit his flocks at distant periods. But whether near or far away, the farmer resigns pretty nearly the whole management to his shepherds. Theoretically, these auxiliaries are in the capacity of hired servants; but practically, they are a species of subordinate partners in the concern; and left so much to themselves, this becomes an indispensable arrangement. The Scotch shepherd is an educated, religious, and highly trustworthy being. Living with his wife in a small thatched house in a remote glen, and his occupation being more of the character of watching than working, he has a large share of time on his hands, becomes a diligent reader, and as for power of argument on kittle points of theology, is a fair match for a bishop. The disposition to argue-bargle on religious topics is no doubt an unpleasant feature in the Scotch character; yet, after all, as everybody must have his weaknesses, I should incline to prefer a peasant metaphysician to a peasant nothing-at-all—a shepherd whose mind keeps criticising all the week long on last Sunday's sermon, to a labourer in a smock who keeps thinking only of bacon or beer. Talking of this, I am reminded of an anecdote of a Scotch shepherd, which gives one an idea of the character. A minister engaged in making a periodical visitation to the houses of his parishioners, was addressed by a venerable worthy—'Noo, sir, since ye've speered sae many questions at me, will ye allow me to speer aye at you?' 'By all means, John; go on.' 'Weel, then, will ye tell me whether it's a greater sin to steal at mid-day or at midnight?' 'How can you ask so silly a question, John?' replied the minister. 'I shall give you no answer to it.' In the course of years, the minister was summoned to attend John on his deathbed. The veteran of the hills was at the last gasp; but something seemed to lie on his mind. 'If there be anything troubling your conscience, John, I hope you'll tell me what it is,' said the minister. 'I have naething particular, sir, except yon question you never answered.' 'What question?' 'The question

as to whether it's a greater sin to steal at noonday than in the dead o' night.' 'I cannot imagine,' answered the clergyman, 'why you should consider there is any difference in the sin, at whatever hour it be committed.' 'Ah, sir, I have ye noo,' replied the dying rustic with a gleam of satisfaction. 'Ye're clearly in the wrang; for he that steals at mid-day has only as sin to answer for; but he that steals when it's dark thinks to cheat God, and that makes the theft a double sin!' With this delightful victory over the minister, John died in peace.

Besides their love of polemics, the southland shepherds are great politicians, and take a considerable interest in the moving events of the day. The expedient by which they carry on their literary correspondence is curious. There being few houses in the compass of their extensive walks, they have certain well-known appointed places among the hills where newspapers and letters may be deposited. By this means a newspaper or magazine will be handed on from hand to hand, and read over a district of fifty miles. These post-offices, as they may be called, are usually the dry cleft of a rock, or a recess within a particular whin bush, not likely to be stumbled on by strangers.

Hogg, who spent his early years as a shepherd, has pictured many traits of this class of men—their meetings at night to discuss social and ethical questions, their endurance of fatigue during snow-storms, and their generally primitive way of living. I think, however, that he has not recorded the manner in which they frequently rise in their profession. What a shepherd realises, put it altogether, may not be worth more than fifty pounds a year; yet look how he manages. A free cot-house; three loads of meal per annum; the grass of a cow; peat fuel free, if there be any, and the driving of coal, if there be none; and the keep of ordinarily forty-five sheep—a pig also, kept by the guidwife—are about the whole of it. In the country, however, there seems to be a blessing in the manner of living. Wants are limited, luxuries are scarcely thought of, and therefore little money is required to be given out. Nine sheep are sold every year, as they come to perfection; and as many lambs are left to make up the deficiency. The sale of these sheep, also, of a certain number of lambs, and likewise of a quantity of wool, forms the cash-bringing-in principle. What is there to pay for but 'schooling to the bairns?'—a thing never omitted—and occasionally a new gown or coat; the bulk of the garments being of homespun material. Economy!—how badly the world would get on without thee! What a useless animal the man who habitually spends all he makes, in comparison with him who keeps adding to the capital of society! Shepherds occasionally rise to be farmers; and when such is the case, they usually help each other. Half-a-dozen acquaintances will lend their whole savings to a neighbour, on the occasion of his taking a small farm; and how creditable to have to tell that these loans are usually given without any kind of written acknowledgment.

The possession of a stock of sheep is indispensable to a shepherd seeking employment; and whatever be the number he possesses, it is a necessary arrangement that a portion of them shall mingle with each flock under his charge, by which means he is furnished with the strongest inducement to take care of the whole of the sheep on the farm. Sheep are sold in detachments at fairs and trysts, and always according to quality. A good is not mixed with a bad lot. As the shepherd's sheep are sold along with those of the farmer, and are afterwards accounted for, the shepherd has here another strong inducement to be careful; because the more sheep of his own which can be draughted into the good lots, the more money he receives. On this account he is as anxious as his master to improve the general breed on the farm, and to secure the flocks against injury or deterioration. I was curious to know how a shepherd is able to realise a stock at his outset in life. He commences while a boy. Employed first as a humble

assistant on a farm, his master, by way of rewarding his diligence, will probably give him a ewe lamb; and failing this present, he receives a lamb from his father. This lamb is his first venture. It feeds with his master's flocks, and its increase in due season is his property. In a few years, by means of this increase, and also by a rigid economy in wages, which enables him to buy a few sheep, he gradually attains a full stock, and then payment to him in money ceases. Now the owner of forty-five sheep, each with a distinctive mark as his property, he feels all the satisfaction and importance of having an investment liable to increase, and which care and perseverance may improve. When he leaves his place, he does not take his sheep with him. His master or his successor must buy his stock of animals, and let them remain, because sheep have curious ways about them, and don't like removals. Day by day, for a series of years, flocks range in the same unvarying circle; always coming round by the sweet low-lying pastures at noon, and nibbling their way to the higher grounds at night. With respect to the social character of sheep, a stranger looking at a hill-side might suppose that, dotted like white specks over it, the sheep had no connection with each other. Quite a mistake. They form distinct societies among themselves; and those which constitute one group of acquaintances never willingly mingle with another.

Within the last forty years a great change has taken place in the breeds of sheep pasturing in these regions. Formerly, the small or black-faced animal was universal; but now, for the sake of finer and longer wool, the Cheviot, Leicester, and other white-faced varieties are more common. The old Scotch sheep may be said to have been better adapted for a hilly country than the heavy and refined creatures of modern days. He was a capital climber, could 'loup a dike' like a hunter at a steeple-chase, and, according to my friend's account, he possessed a particularly happy knack of eating whins—prickly furze—'without jaggings his mouth.' This latter point of character, from long habit, was apparently engrained on the instincts of the animal; for a young black-faced lamb, without instruction, would take quite naturally to the nibbling of whins, and do the thing so discreetly, that it escaped any sort of injury.

With such chat the night was pleasantly spent; and even in the morning before starting I was able to squeeze out an additional budget of pastoral statistics. However, the time approaches for parting; and with many kindly adieus, we are on our way for Yarrow.

The road we took was by Traquair, the ancient seat of an earl of that title, with a scattered village adjoining. Up the valley of the Quair, a small tributary of the Tweed, our calash proceeded at a fair pace, passing on our right the scene of the old lyric, 'the Bush aboon Traquair,' till we got immersed among the hills, and nothing met the eye but bare round-topped mountains, wild and solitary. Up and up we went, till, reaching the height of the country, we descended by a southern slope to the vale of the Yarrow.

Suddenly the Yarrow, a silvery streamlet, is seen winding down the hollow. We can at first scarcely understand how a thing so small, and with so little of the garniture of nature around, can have excited such a variety of poetical emotions. Yet no river in Scotland, not even the Tweed, has been the theme of so many successive poems—generally, however, of a doleful or pensive kind, referring to acts of strife, or appropriate to

'The grace of forest charms decayed,
And pastoral melancholy.'

First we have the old ballad describing an unfortunate brawl on the banks of the Yarrow between Scott of Tushielaw and his brother-in-law one of the Scotts of Thirlstone, in which the latter is slain.

'Oh stay at hame, my noble lord!
Oh stay at hame my marrow!
My cruel brother will you betray,
On the dowie howms o' Yarrow.'

How far the rhyme of 'marrow and Yarrow' may have induced poets to make the vale of Yarrow the scene of their ballads may be left to conjecture. 'Marrow' is a good Scotch word, signifying a match—any two things not properly paired being said to be 'not marrows'; and it would seem that this was too excellent an idea in connection with Yarrow to escape poetic seizure. Thanks to this, perhaps, and also to the old ballad, Hamilton of Bangour has bequeathed the fine effusion beginning,

'Buck ye,* buck ye, my bonnie, bonnie bride,
Buck ye, buck ye, my winsome marrow;
Buck ye, buck ye, my bonnie, bonnie bride,
And think nae mair o' the braes o' Yarrow.'

Other ballads involve in their respective imagery the howms or holms of Yarrow, with the adjoining scenery, in which some of the old Border castles still figure. Finally, in consequence of these poems, old and new, Mr Wordsworth contracted a veneration for the vale—a feeling so high, that he refused in 1803, during a tour in Scotland, to enter Yarrow, lest the sight of it should dispel the agreeable vision cherished by fancy. He consequently wrote his fine poem of 'Yarrow Unvisited.' In 1814, making another tour in Scotland, he ventured into this fairyland of poetic fiction, and commemorated the result of the experiment in the kindred poem of 'Yarrow Visited,' commencing with the well-known lines—

'And is this—Yarrow? This the stream
Of which my fancy cherished
So faithfully a waking dream?
An image that hath perished!

Oh that some minstrel's harp were near
To utter notes of gladness,
And chase this silence from the air,
That fills my heart with sadness!'

Entering Yarrow by the route from Traquair, we have immediately before us the farm of Mount Benger, of which Hogg was some time tenant; and beyond, on the opposite side of the vale, Altrive Lake, a house of respectable appearance, in which the poor shepherd terminated his earthly career. By an opening among the hills in this direction, a road proceeds to Ettrick, a kindred valley on the south. In turning to the right up the Yarrow, we have an almost immediate view of the chief beauty of the district—St Mary's Loch, a fine sheet of water several miles in length, fringed with a white pebbly beach. Passing the old tower of Dryhope, once the residence of the beautiful Mary Scott, the Flower of Yarrow, and the poetically as well as religiously-consecrated burying-ground of St Mary's Kirk, the drive is delightful, particularly if the day be warm and sunny, as it was on the present occasion. We are now in the bosom of the Vale of Yarrow; and bound for the general centre of attraction at Tibby Shiels, we pass the opening into Meggetdale, also possessing scenes celebrated in tradition and Border minstrelsy.

Pity we have no time to go up the Megget; but it is approaching noon, and Tibby's cozy hostelry is now in sight, nestling among a few trees at the head of the lake. We must get on our way, for we have much work before us; and that vulgar affair, dinner, even in a land of poetry, must be thought of. Behold us, then, driving up to Tibby's. Erected on a slip of meadow land, with a small garden around, her little domicile may be considered quite an oasis in the desert; nor could it have been placed with better effect. To the east stretches St Mary's Loch, while a similar sheet of water, the Loch of the Lowes, bounds it on the west. Not properly speaking 'a public,' for Tibby would not expose herself to promiscuous intrusion 'by taking out the license,' the establishment—a neat slated house, with a surprising amount of stowage—answers all the purposes of a wayside inn; and nowhere will the angler or knapsacked tourist find such a place of comfortable repose.

* Buck ye—dress or adorn yourself.

'Well, Tibby, ye'll not recollect me?'

'Aih, I do that,' replied the worthy dame, in the mellifluous dialect of the Forest, as she bustles forward. 'I mind o' you real weel; and I am sae glad to see you. Will ye a' come in by?'

'Not at present, Tibby; we are going to the Gray-Mare's Tail; and you will be so kind as prepare dinner for us before we come back.'

'I'll do that.'

And so, with this arrangement, off we went on a walking excursion to see one of the greatest natural curiosities of the south of Scotland. The Gray-Mare's Tail, be it known to those who never heard of the thing before, is a streamlet from Loch Skene, a solitary sheet of water, among the higher mountains, which dashes down a rocky and precipitous ravine, and forms a waterfall of some two hundred feet. Pursuing the Vale of Yarrow to its extremity on the west, we descend into the Vale of Moffat Water, down which, at the distance of a mile, we come upon the cataract. Rain had fortunately been falling among the hills, and the Tail was in prime order—a grand stream of foam and spray leaping from point to point in snowy masses, till it was lost in the gurgling abyss beneath. Loch Skene, whence the rivulet proceeds, is reckoned to be one of the gloomiest mountain tarns in Scotland. I had visited it the previous summer, and will ever retain a forcible recollection of its appearance—silent, dark, and desolate. Difficult of access, and surrounded by savage mosses and hills, it was in its lonely sublimity a thing to be associated in the imagination with the fabled and inaccessible 'Waters of Oblivion.'

Back to Tibby's at four. The fowls and gigot excellent; but a greater treat was a renewed chat with the good-natured hostess.

'Tibby, ye'll often be rather lonely here, I suppose?'

'Ay, we are that. Sometimes in winter we dinna see a livin' cratur for three months. But we maunna compleen. There's generally plenty visitors at this time o' the year.'

'I've heard that you have sometimes as many as five-and-thirty in a night.'

'That's only about the twalt o' August, when the shooters come up among the hills.'

'But you have not beds for so large a number?'

'That's true; but after a' the beds are filled, they just lie on the floor, or onygate. We do what we can to mak' them comfortable.'

'And you have been here many years? It will now be a considerable time since your husband died?'

'Ay, it's a lang time; but Providence has aye been kind to the widow and the fatherless. I'm thankfu' I've been spared to bring up my family, as it was my duty to do.'

'And you always prefer keeping your own name?'

'Ou ay; folk a' ken me best as Tibby Shiels; and I daresay, when I'm dead and gane, this place here will still be ca'd Tibby Shiels's.'

'I understand there's been a grand wedding over at Lord Napier's.'

'A grand waddin', indeed; there hasna been the like o't in Ettrick for a hunder years I daresay.'

And so we had Tibby's account of this great local event, with a lot of gossip besides, until it was time to depart. We did not bid good-by without regret at the necessary shortness of our visit; and I feel bound to add, for the general enlightenment of mankind, that if anybody does not know what to do with himself, and can put up with the fare of the hills, and wishes to get out of the reach of post-offices and other sources of harassment, he should go and rusticate at Tibby Shiels's.

Our drive down Yarrow was accelerated by the approach of nightfall; but a sufficiency of light remained, as we issued from the hills at Selkirk, to show that the scenery had changed its character, and that we were again entering on the soft landscapes of the Tweed. Next day was devoted to a series of visits to places abounding in interest and beauty: Abbotsford—the

ruined abbey of Melrose and Dryburgh, in the last of which lie the remains of Scott—and finally Kelso; the whole a chain of spots over a tract of twenty miles, in one of the loveliest districts in Scotland. But all this has been again and again described, and from me requires no repetition; so—to draw a long story to a close—here ends A DAY IN YARROW. W. C.

THE JAGUAR HUNTER.

THE pioneer settlers in the southern states of America are often exposed to danger from the attacks of wild animals. This is more particularly the case in approaching the tropical regions. The squatters of Texas relate many fearful tales of conflicts with panthers and wolves. In the states of the Mexican union, however, the ferocious jaguar, or South American tiger, is met with, which commits fearful ravages among the numerous herds of cattle and horses, from the breeding and sale of which many large proprietors derive a princely income. I was once staying for a few weeks at one of these estates, where a jaguar had for some time kept the whole establishment in alarm, and escaped all attempts made for its destruction. At last, on the return of a hunter, who had been absent on a distant expedition, all apprehension as to further annoyance ceased; for such were the courage and skill of the new-comer in attacking these animals, as to have gained for him the name of Bermudes *el Matasiete*, or 'Killer-of-Seven.' On the night following his arrival, he invited me to join him in watching for the intruder, and appointed the rendezvous at the *Ojo de Agua*, a fountain at the foot of a slope stretching gradually away till it met the forest.

Soon after sunset I strolled towards the place agreed on. A tall cedar stood near the fountain, its lower branches dipping into the water as it bubbled away to the bottom of the valley. Behind the cedar rose the knotty trunks of a group of mahogany-trees, interspersed with flowery sumachs. On the opposite side, a little glade was formed by a cluster of ash-trees, at the entrance of which I found the hunter lying at his ease upon the grass, enjoying the coolness after the extreme heat of the day, with his blue-barrelled rifle at his side. I congratulated him on the choice of so picturesque a site for the rendezvous. 'I am delighted,' he replied with a smile, the whole meaning of which I did not at first comprehend, 'that the place is to your taste, but you will see before long that it is better chosen than you think.'

We had not long been seated when a second hunter appeared, a tall Canadian, his rifle in one hand, and leading a lame colt by the other. After exchanging a few words with Bermudes, he tied the limping animal to the stem of the cedar by a long and strong cord, and then came to sit down by our side on the moss. I was at a loss to understand the object of these preparations, and of the fires which had been kindled in various directions. On questioning the Mexican, he rose, and conducting me to the edge of the fountain, showed me several formidable footprints in the damp soil. 'Those marks,' he continued, 'were made yesterday—of that I am certain. The jaguar, therefore, has not drunk for twenty-four hours, and for twenty leagues round there is not a drop of water but what is here on the estate. The fires yonder will scare the animal in that quarter; while thirst and the scent of the colt will certainly bring him here in the course of this night.'

The logic of this reasoning appeared to me irresistible; and I found myself, quite unarmed, suddenly transformed into a tiger hunter. At first I thought my best course would be to make a quiet retreat; a mixture of curiosity and self-esteem, however, induced me to stay. The Canadian was stretched at full length on the bank, snoring loudly. Bermudes beckoned me to sit down by his side, and to pass away the time, gave me an account of his numerous adventures. As we had yet four hours to wait before the animal could be expected to make his appearance, I sat patiently listen-

ing, while the hunter went on with his tale. For an hour no other sound save that of his voice and the loud breathing of the sleeper disturbed the silence. All at once the colt started and reared in alarm, and the dry bushes crackled with so dismal a sound, that I could not repress a shudder. 'Did you not hear a howl?' I inquired of Bermudes, who shook his head and laughed as he answered. 'When you have once, only once, heard a tiger's roar, you will never again be likely to mistake for it the humming of mosquitos. In a few hours you will be as well instructed on this point as I am.'

It was a false alarm: all became quiet as before, while the hunter continued the history of his exploits. But a second interruption followed; the colt began to utter a cry between a shriek and a moan. 'Is it mosquitos this time,' I asked, 'that so terrifies the poor animal?'

'Probably not,' rejoined Bermudes. 'Listen!'

'Hold—look yonder!' I said, pointing to a young poplar that rose above the surrounding trees; 'it is not the wind which shakes that tree while all the others are motionless.'

'It is the jaguar,' said the hunter after a pause. 'At present he is playing the brave, but his hour is not yet come; and for the moment he is more afraid than you are. Do not think, however,' he pursued, 'that tiger-shooting has no dangers. You will be able to judge how much another hour without drinking will have exasperated the animal. I have seen many a brave man turn pale at their frightful roar.'

Having expressed my uneasiness at being unarmed, my companion promised to furnish me with a weapon when the fitting moment should arrive, and resumed his recital where he had left off. But as the night grew darker, the interruptions became more frequent, and by and by a distant growl was heard, followed by a plaintive and menacing howl. 'I was mistaken,' said the hunter, coming to a pause; 'instead of one tiger there are two. Males never attack in company; and should it be male and female, we shall have a double warning, for Providence, which has given a rattle to the most dangerous of serpents to announce its approach, has also given to wild animals eyes that glisten in the night, and roaring voices to proclaim their attack.'

This assertion was far from agreeable, but the danger was still distant; the moment had not yet come when thirst makes these animals forget the involuntary dread which they have of the presence of man. All was again quiet in the woods, whose gloomy depths were thrown into shadow by the moonlight. The Canadian had risen from the grass, and leaned drowsily against the tree, smoking a short pipe, with his rifle between his knees. I had learned enough of the course of the stars to know that the hour was at hand for which we had so long been watching. Bermudes again spoke:—'It is time now to think of you,' he said. 'Do you not perceive that the silence becomes more and more profound around us, and that the odour of the plants has almost changed? Under the influence of the night they exhale a new perfume. When you have lived longer in the desert, you will learn that each hour of the day, as well as of the night, has its peculiar signification. At each hour, as one voice becomes silent, another makes itself heard. At present ferocious beasts salute the darkness, as to-morrow the birds will salute the dawn. We are near the hour when man loses the imposing influence of his look—at night his eye becomes dim, while that of wild animals brightens and pierces the deepest gloom: man is the king of day, but the jaguar is king of darkness.'

After uttering these words with a grave emphasis, the hunter rose, and fetching a bundle from the place where it had been deposited, unrolled two sheepskins covered with their wool, and, drawing his knife from its sheath, observed, 'You see your arms!'

'And what, in the name of wonder, do you expect me to do with that?' I inquired. 'I hoped at least for a rifle.'

Bermudes proceeded to explain that, on such an occasion, a rifle could be intrusted to those only who were sure of their aim. 'You will roll these skins round your left arm,' he continued, 'and take the knife in your right hand; then you put your right knee to the ground, and rest your protected arm upon the left knee. In this manner the arm defends your head and body, while your stomach will be shielded by the knee; for tigers have an ugly habit of trying to disembowel their enemy with a stroke of their paw. If you are attacked, you present your arm, and while the animal's tusks are buried in the wool, you rip him up from flank to shoulder with one plunge of the knife.'

'All that appears to me incontestable,' was my answer; 'but I would rather hope that two hunters such as you will not miss your tiger. For my part, I shall hunt, as you call it, with my hands in my pockets; that will be more original.'

Failing the armour of sheepskins, the hunter urged me to take the knife, which I accepted. The two associates then primed their rifles, and we waited without exchanging a word. The lower part of the forest was now in profound darkness, while the little space around the fountain was brilliantly illuminated. We were sheltered by the drooping branches of a large mangrove, forming a kind of natural arch. Twenty paces in front reclined the colt, whose instinct was to be the hunters' guide. Presently I saw the animal raise its head with evident signs of uneasiness, which were soon after succeeded by broken cries of terror, and efforts to escape from its fastenings. These attempts being useless, it remained trembling in every limb: a breath of terror seemed to pervade the atmosphere. All at once a cavernous roar from the neighbouring heights pealed in echoes through the woods; the colt hid its head in the grass. A deep silence followed: the two hunters crept from the shelter, and I heard the double click as they cocked their rifles.

An instant after, a terrible roar again burst upon our ears: a form of light colour darted through the air upon the colt, which had crouched down in terror: there was a noise of crashing bones, followed instantaneously by the report of Bermudes's rifle.

'Your knife!' he cried to his companion, who was preparing to fire. 'Look up; that is for you!'

I turned my eyes in the direction indicated by Matasiete, as he took the Canadian's knife. High up among the branches of the cedar I saw two large eyeballs shining like burning coals, watching all our movements: it was the second jaguar, whose tail was lashing the foliage, and beating off the dried moss from the branches in showers. The Canadian stood motionless, with his eye fixed upon the two fierce-gleaming lights in the tree. Meantime the wounded jaguar sprang at one leap close to Bermudes, where the moonlight showed the furious animal. The blood was streaming from one of his legs, shattered by the ball. Collecting himself for a last rush, the animal lowered his head, beat the air, and howled in fury; his blazing eyes seemed to expand to twice their ordinary size. Bermudes stood, self-possessed, on the defensive, holding his knife forwards. At length the tiger leaped; but his muscles were weakened by the wound, and the hunter, stepping aside, buried his knife in the monster's heart as he fell: there was a terrible yell—a struggle of agony—and then all was over.

'Whether or no,' exclaimed the brave Matasiete, 'there is a skin badly torn, to say nothing of my own,' at the same time showing his arm lacerated by a long gash. He had scarcely finished, when a second roar was heard in the direction of the cedar: it was answered by the report of a rifle: a noise of rending branches, followed by a heavy fall, announced the skill of a practised marksman. The Canadian had aimed between the glowing eyes. When the two hunters, going round to the other side of the spring, had found the body, their shouts of triumph gave me to understand that the Canadian's accurate eye had not been deceived.

It was not without a feeling of compassion that I approached another victim of the slayers and slain—the dead colt. The poor animal lay stretched upon the grass; a bleeding wound at the back of the head, and another on its nose, showed where the tiger's claws had fallen; the complete fracture of the vertebrae of the neck proved death to have been instantaneous. Already cold and rigid, the first jaguar lay near: I measured it with my eye, but at a distance, when the two others arrived dragging the female, whose skull had been shattered by the ball: this time, at least, the skin was unbroken.

Bermudes complimented me on my courage, in what he persisted in calling tiger-hunting. I, however, disclaimed anything like bravery. The hunters seemed disposed to pass the night near the booty which they had so well earned; and preferring the open air to my close chamber, I agreed to keep them company if they would light a fire. My wish was soon gratified; we stretched ourselves on the moss near the blazing wood, and before many minutes had elapsed, were sound asleep.

On awaking the next morning, I found the two companions with their shirt sleeves tucked up to the elbow, and stained arms, busily engaged in flaying the two jaguars. When they had completed their task, which was performed with the dexterity acquired by long practice in similar operations, they threw the skins over their shoulders, and we all took the way to our original quarters, where our arrival was hailed with prolonged congratulations. Bermudes and his comrade received the usual reward of ten dollars for each skin; and the 'Killer-of-Seven' would now have to add another number to his surname.

COMMODORE THUROT.

In the year 1727, at Christmas, a man named Thurot came to one of the churches in Boulogne with an infant to be baptised. It was then customary for ladies of rank to attend churches at Christmas time, in order to stand as sponsors for infants belonging to the humbler classes. One named Madame Tallard came forward to offer herself as sponsor for Thurot's child. The ceremony was proceeding, when Madame Tallard was surprised to observe tears streaming from the eyes of the father. She inquired the reason, and learned that his wife, the mother of the infant, was just then receiving the last rites of sepulture in the churchyard. Touched by the incident, the kind-hearted lady did not leave the church without making the poor man a present, and requesting that, if the child should live till she returned to Boulogne, he might be sent to see her.

Thurot, though now in comparatively humble life, was the son of parents who had moved in a superior rank. His father was a gentleman named Farrell, who had been a captain in the army of James II. in Ireland, and following the fortunes of that monarch, had become a member of his household at St Germain. There a gentleman of good connexions condescended, poor as he was, to marry him. The displeasure of relations, the loss of employment and means of subsistence, followed. The husband came to an early grave, and the lady survived him but a few months, having first, however, given birth to an infant, who was taken charge of by her relations, and brought up under his maternal name. This was the father of the infant of whose history we are now to give some particulars.

Young Thurot grew up under the care of his father at Boulogne. Madame Tallard continued to have a regard for the child, and permitted him to be the occasional playfellow of her own son. When he was fifteen years of age, one Farrell, the captain of a smuggling vessel, became acquainted with his father, and claimed relationship with him. This man told Monsieur Thurot that the O'Farrells were a flourishing family in Connaught: he himself was a prosperous gentleman, and he offered to take charge of the boy, and make his for-

tune. Thurot having agreed to this proposal, the youth was fitted out at the expense of his Irish cousin, and sailed with him for Limerick.

Touching at the Isle of Man, then the grand entrepôt of the contraband trade, young Thurot became disgusted with the conduct of his relative, and declined to proceed further in his company. While waiting for a vessel in which he might return to Boulogne, his handsome and sprightly appearance attracted the attention of a gentleman of the island of Anglesey, who had come to Man upon some smuggling business, being extensively engaged in that traffic. With little persuasion, the young man entered his service. He was soon initiated into the mysteries of the smuggling trade, and repeatedly visited Ireland on business intrusted to him by his master. One whole year of this early period of his life was spent on smuggling duty at Carlingford, where he acquired a knowledge of the English language. At length, tiring of this way of life, and anxious to learn something of his Irish relations, he set off for Dublin with only a few shillings in his pocket. The adventure ended in his being glad to engage himself as a nobleman's valet, in which capacity he served for nearly two years, when some irregularities in his own conduct led to his being discharged. He then went to the north of Ireland, and re-engaged in the contraband trade, for which his active enterprising genius was peculiarly fitted. It must be said in his favour, that, while his irregular education had furnished him with no protection against this demoralising career, which was then followed by thousands of apparently respectable persons, he conducted himself throughout all its rough scenes with a degree of both honour and generosity hardly to have been expected, and which could only be owing to his own natural good qualities.

War breaking out between Britain and France, it would appear that Thurot engaged in a privateer of his own country, and in this capacity became a prisoner of war in England. It was in the year 1745, when Marshal Belleisle was about to be discharged from captivity in our country, that Thurot effected his escape under extraordinary circumstances. Having left his prison, he concealed himself in the country by day, and came to a port on the southern coast at night. Here his object was to lay hold of some little unoccupied vessel in which to sail for France. Swimming about the harbour with great precautions against being observed, he came at length to a small smuggling bark, which he thought well fitted for his purpose. It lay, however, beside a larger vessel, to which it was attached, and it had no sails. The danger was, of course, that some person in the larger vessel would detect him before he could get it set adrift. Nevertheless this bold adventurer actually climbed the shrouds of the larger vessel to possess himself of a sail; returned with his prize, set free the little bark, and got clear off without detection. In two days, half famished, yet in the highest spirits, he entered the port of Calais. This strange adventure made him an object of public curiosity; nevertheless, the bark which he thought he had made his own was appropriated for the government. Thurot was reduced to despair. It chanced, however, that the lady of the Marshal Belleisle had come to Calais to meet her husband, then about to be set at liberty in England. Thurot was introduced to her to tell his own tale. At her intercession the marshal took up his case, and in the long-run Thurot obtained possession of the vessel, together with the friendship of that eminent commander. It is alleged that this was the first step of advancement made in the world by one who was subsequently to become a figure in history.*

In the course of his subsequent smuggling career Thurot visited Scotland. He sailed as master of the *Annie* of Leith, in one voyage from Leith to London.

* This anecdote appears in a rare book, entitled 'A Series of Letters, Discovering the Scheme projected by France in 1750, &c. By Oliver Macalister, Esq.' 2 vols. 4to. 1767. We cannot say much for the authority, but the story may nevertheless be true.

He also spent a few years in the Metropolis. A gentleman some years afterwards recollected meeting him occasionally at this time at a club which was principally frequented by Frenchmen. One night a few of these persons launched forth into abuse of the English and Irish, to which Thurot listened patiently for some time without remark. At length, finding them become more scurrilous, he very calmly got up, and led two of them by the nose out of the room, after which he coolly returned, resumed his chair, and entered upon a new and more agreeable subject. Such was Thurot. It is not surprising that, when he returned to Boulogne, and resumed the contraband trade, he rose to be, as it were, its king; for even among the rudest people the superior morale always tells. Wrong on the general point as to the rectitude of smuggling, Thurot was right at least in all the included particulars. It is said that at one time his transactions as a smuggler reached a sum equal to twenty thousand pounds annually. At length, the government paying a vigorous attention to these malpractices, Thurot fell under heavy penalties, and was taken into custody. For some time he was confined in the common prison at Dunkirk; afterwards he was taken to Paris, and required to make discoveries for the future prevention of smuggling. He was now indebted to the good offices of M. Tallard, son of his godmother, also to Marshal Belleisle, who had a special love of men of ardent and enterprising character. It could, however, be no common smuggler whose prosecution ended in his being appointed to the command of one of the king's ships; for such was the case. Thurot, after all, preferred the command of a privateer, in which he did good service at the beginning of the seven years' war. During the year 1758, the doings of the Marshal Belleisle privateer in the seas between England and Norway were the subject of general remark. This was M. Thurot's vessel. In it alone he repulsed a couple of English war vessels off the Red Head, leaving them in such a state as to be unable to follow him.

Much excitement was produced in England in 1759, by intelligence of a large naval armament, including flat-bottomed boats, which was preparing in the French harbours. The design of the armament was kept a profound secret; but no doubt was entertained that it was intended to invade the British shores. It is now known that Prince Charles Stuart was to have accompanied it, on an arrangement favourable to France, in the event of his recovering the throne of his ancestors. For a part in the enterprise, Thurot was recommended to the French cabinet by that reputation for boldness, skill, and prudence which he had acquired in inferior capacities. He was accordingly appointed to command a squadron of five frigates, with which he was to sail to the Irish coast, and thus make a diversion, while the main fleet, under Admiral Conflans, should make directly for the southern shores of England. While this commission was actually in his pocket—without, however, his knowing his special destination—he appeared to be fruitlessly waiting for court favour. The ministers even affected to discourage his applications for employment, though secretly, perhaps, spending hours with him in their closets, taking advantage of his knowledge of the British coasts, and scheming out the particulars of his enterprise.

It is remarkable that no part of the plan met with any success, excepting what was under the care of this offshoot of the house of O'Farrell. Detachments of the English fleet blocked up the French ships in their harbours for months. When at length Conflans took to sea with a large fleet, he had scarcely left Brest when he was attacked by Sir Edward Hawke, and completely overpowered. Before this event, Thurot had broken through all obstacles at Dunkirk (October 17), and with his five ships sailed for Norway, a point from which he was afterwards to move as further instructions might direct. He had with him, besides the usual crews, upwards of 1200 land forces.

Though pursued by Commodore Boyes, Thurot got

safe to Gottenburg in nine days; after staying there a short time, he proceeded to Bergen, on which voyage he lost company of one of his vessels in a storm. Sickiness, a consequence of imperfect victualling and other bad arrangements, beset the expedition. They nevertheless set sail towards the end of January for Ireland. For weeks they beat about in the North Sea, suffering much from the weather, and greatly disheartened by want of provisions and sickness. Another of the vessels now parted company, and was no more heard of. With the remainder of his squadron, Thurot appeared off the island of Islay, on the west coast of Scotland (February 16, 1760), being resolved to make an attempt to obtain some supplies of provisions. Mr Archibald Macdonald and Mr Godfrey Macneil, two gentlemen of the island, went out to them in a small boat, thinking they were British vessels in distress. They soon found them to be foreign ships, but for some time did not discover them to be the squadron which had held the British coasts in such anxiety during the winter. The commander, a young man of small stature, but elegant form, with dark intelligent eyes, and apparently of frank and affable character, came up and addressed them in English. He wished them to take his vessels to a safe harbour, which they consented to do, and conducted them accordingly to Aros Bay, near the south entry to the Sound of Islay. The visitors were treated with the greatest civility in the commander's own cabin. Then a council was held, at which it was determined to make a landing on the island in order to obtain provisions. Two hundred men accordingly went ashore, accompanied by Messrs Macneil and Macdonald, who interceded to induce the country people to bring cattle, poultry, and meal, to be disposed of to the strangers. So extreme was the condition of these poor men, that they dug up potatoes and cabbage, and ate them raw with the greatest avidity. From Mr Campbell of Ardmore they obtained forty-eight bullocks, seventeen bags of oatmeal, and other articles; as to payment, the French officers generally seemed willing to make little or none, but Thurot obliged them to render full compensation, bringing out the royal commission to show that they were to commit no unprovoked hostilities in Scotland. Of the whole sum due, a part was paid in coin; for the rest, bills were granted on the French king's banker at Paris, and these were afterwards duly honoured. The whole conduct of Thurot showed a humane, liberal spirit, far removed from that of his associates, and such as could not but inspire a deep regret that he should have come to Britain as an enemy. It was only now that he and his fellow-officers heard of the downfall of the hopes of France in the utter defeat of Admiral Conflans' fleet. When this was mentioned by the Islay gentlemen, the Frenchmen dropped their knives and forks from their hands, and sat mute for some time.

Thurot nevertheless determined to strike a stroke in Ireland, both because such had been his instructions, and because they could not now get directly back to France for want of provisions, all they had obtained in Islay being only sufficient for six days. On the third day from his arrival in Islay Sound he set sail, and on Thursday the 23d reached Carrickfergus. This town, and its ruinous castle or port, were now garrisoned by one hundred and eighty war troops, under Lieutenant-Colonel Jennings. These men were exercising near the town, without any apprehension of approaching danger, when the strange vessels appeared, and immediately landed about a thousand men. The British soldiers withdrew to the town, closely followed by the French. Some gallant efforts were made to defend the gates, and keep out the enemy; but in vain. The French quickly obtained possession of all but the castle, where the forces were now concentrated. Here some smart skirmishing took place; but it was quickly found that the British were unprepared for such a determined resistance as their officers were willing to have made. They were deficient in the main element—ammuni-

tion;
Jenni
town
soldier
of the
fell in

On
Belfas
to buy
refusa
sever
gus,
refusa
(Duk
reput
the t
once
ture,
Brilli
in qu
on th

The
was
Galle
from
Engl
weigh
to a
quic
was
com

Fren
and
two
desc
the
of e
that
man
cula
in
fact
base
know
shat

an
alm
as
stor
not
figh
pos
of
sep
fro
and
Th
wa
at
bo
ack
Gu
me
lia
be
sh
so
we

It
co
ti
vi
ne
er

tion; and the fort had a breach in it of fifty feet long. Jennings therefore capitulated, on the proviso that the town should not be plundered, and that the English soldiers should be exchanged as prisoners for so many of the French. A considerable number of the French fell in the action, and the general was wounded in the leg.

On the 23d, the invading party sent a flag of truce to Belfast, demanding certain provisions, and threatening to burn both that town and Carrickfergus in case of a refusal. The demands were complied with. Some severe measures were actually taken with Carrickfergus, on the plea that provisions were concealed and refused. Meanwhile the Lord Lieutenant at Dublin (Duke of Bedford) was taking measures effectually to repulse the French; and Thurot found it advisable, on the third day of his possession of the town, to take once more to his frigates. The very day of his departure, Captain Elliott of the *Eolus*, with the *Pallas* and *Brilliant* in his company, entered Carrickfergus harbour in quest of the French squadron, having been ordered on this duty by the Lord Lieutenant.

Thurot had sailed for the coast of Scotland, and he was lying between the Isle of Man and the Mull of Galloway, when, on the second morning—only a week from his so far successful descent on Ireland—the English squadron bore down upon him. Instantly weighing anchor, he stood out from the Scotch coast, to save himself from being embayed; but he was quickly overtaken, and brought to an engagement. It was a short, but fierce and bloody fight, ending in the complete triumph of the English, who took all the three French vessels. In the *Marshal Belleisle* a hundred and eighty men were killed and wounded; in the other two vessels a hundred and sixteen. Their decks were described as a frightful scene of slaughter. Amongst the slain was poor Thurot himself, much to the regret of enemies as well as friends; for it was generally known that, though a dangerous, he was a generous foe, and many anecdotes redounding to his honour were in circulation. So perished, at three-and-thirty, a man who, in happier circumstances, might have been a benefactor to more nations than his own, but whom the base conditions of his time and place enabled only to be known to us as a bugbear in a less uncompromising shape than usual.

Elliott's victory created general satisfaction, for it put an end to a sense of personal danger, which had been almost universally felt. It almost appeared, however, as if Thurot were the hero of the day. A hundred stories were told of him. It was asserted that he was not a Frenchman. He was English—Irish—Scotch; his fighting for France was but the mistake of fortune. A poet involved these ideas in a Latin epitaph, the turn of which rested on a misinformation as to his place of sepulture. It was said that he had derived bravery from England, vigour from Ireland, powers of endurance from Scotland—from Louis nothing but weapons. These nations contended for his remains; so that it was determined that he should have a grave in Mona, at an equal distance from each. The fact is, that the body of Thurot had been consigned to the sea after the action. It came ashore on the lands of Mochrum, in Galloway, fully clothed, with his insignia as a commander, and sewed up in the silk-velvet carpet of his cabin. Under the care, and at the expense of Sir William Maxwell of Monreath (father, we presume, of the beautiful Jane, Duchess of Gordon), it received honourable burial in the churchyard of Kirkmaiden, the most southerly parish in Scotland (alluded to by Burns in a well-known verse—

* Frae Maidenkirck to Johnie Groat's*).

It is a pity that Sir William did not complete a line of conduct essentially generous, by raising a stone to distinguish the grave of Thurot. Mr Train says—'On visiting the old kirkyard of Kirkmaiden lately, I could not find any person who could point out Thurot's grave, except one old man, and I thought even he acted with

uncertainty. It moved me much when I thought that he whose name had filled with terror many of the inhabitants of some of the seaports of Great Britain and Ireland, whose defeat was celebrated with all the rejoicing that could be manifested for the most important victory, and whose name will go down to posterity with the reputation of an intrepid warrior, should thus be laid in a remote corner of the island which he threatened to conquer, without the spot being exactly known where his remains had crumbled to dust.'

FOSSIL FOOTMARKS.

AMONG the interesting and instructive facts which geologists have derived from fossil remains, there are none more extraordinary than those presented by footmarks of extinct animals. Geology gives us, as must now be generally known, a faint outline of the history of creation—showing one period when no animals higher than fishes existed, another when the only addition to this state of things consisted of reptiles, and finally, a time when mammalian animals were ushered into the world, man being, to all appearance, a crowning addition after the component materials of the earth had come into their present arrangement.

In the earlier stages of the animal creation, the most numerous fossils, after shells, are those of fishes. Wherever fossils have been searched for in the strata which bear them, they have always been found in greater or less abundance; some strata, as the old red sandstone and magnesian limestone, being remarkably rich in organic remains; while the new red, and others of the secondary period, are comparatively barren. It appears as if, by the elevation of the land in this latter period, a great breadth of low sea beaches was thrown up, which would be alternately covered and laid bare by the diurnal tides; and in some instances shallow lakes, estuaries, and lagoons were formed. The shores of these would naturally be the resort of such animals as were then in existence in search of food; their tracks would remain, together with ripple marks and the impressions of rain drops, and afford to the existing generation invaluable evidence respecting the earth's inhabitants and certain natural phenomena in ages so remote.

Nevertheless, when it was first announced that the footmarks of quadrupeds and bipeds had been found on the relics of these ancient beaches in the new red sandstone, the observers were looked upon as dreaming enthusiasts. 'Every one,' writes Professor Ansted, 'will remember the astonishment which Robinson Crusoe is represented to have felt at the sight of a human footprint on the island which he thought deserted; and scarcely less surprising or interesting was the first discovery of these indications of animal existence in a rock so barren of fossils as the new red sandstone, and in a formation in which, till then, there had been no suspicion of the existence of any animals more highly-organised than fishes.' About the year 1830, Dr Deane of Massachusetts observed several extraordinary footprints in a sandstone quarry on the borders of the Connecticut river. He directed the attention of Professor Hitchcock to the appearances, who drew up an interesting memoir upon the subject. The first specimens were in square slabs, taken from a quarry of flagstones, presenting four distinct and perfect tracks of a large bird; the lower stone bearing the depression, and the upper stone the impression, precisely as they would appear if formed in soft mud, and suddenly hardened. Other specimens were soon discovered; similar footmarks were noticed on the stones of the side walks in several of the towns

and villages of Massachusetts; and the quarries visited from which they were taken. Some were found in red shale, in gray micaceous sandstone; and others in a hard sandstone composed of clay and sand. The strata lie at various degrees of inclination, and the footmarks vary in size from very small to incredibly large.

The impressions first examined by Professor Hitchcock were those of an animal with two feet, each provided with three toes; in some instances a fourth toe projected behind in the manner of a spur; and in others all the toes were in front. It was remarked that some of the larger impressions showed traces of a hairy or feathery appendage extending several inches to the rear. The shape of the toes varied: some were straight and tapering, some crooked, and others round and blunt. The bird to which the largest foot belonged had evidently been of great size and weight; for on cleaving some specimens of the tracks crosswise, the clay was found depressed to a depth of three or four inches. By careful separation of the slabs, other specimens were obtained in relief, from which the structure of the foot could be better determined than by the cavities.

Much pains was taken to determine whether the impressions were isolated, or had been produced by an animal walking. In one instance ten tracks were found following each other in regular succession, leaving no doubt of their being continuous steps. They might have been traced farther, had a greater space of the rock been quarried. It was clear, as the row was single, that the marks had been made by a biped, and at a time when the strata were in a horizontal position. 'Sometimes,' in the words of the observer, 'different species of animals, and different individuals, have crossed one another's tracks so often, that all is confusion, and the whole surface appears to have been trodden over; as we often see to be the case where quadrupeds or ducks and geese resort, upon the muddy shores of a stream or pond.' In a small slab recently described to the Geological Society by Dr Mantell, there are rows of consecutive symmetrical marks made by two different birds. 'There is a rare peculiarity displayed in these larger impressions, that adds greatly to their interest: it is the markings of the papillæ, and folds of the cutaneous integument, which are very distinct. The three rows of footprints embrace fifteen impressions, and exhibit the articulations of the toes perfectly. The surface of the stone is pitted by rain drops, from a shower which must have fallen before the birds walked over the soft mud and made the footprints. There are also indistinct traces of the trails of worms, and of an annelid.' Another slab taken from the same locality as that just described, showed among the bird tracks and rain drops the marks of a leaping animal, supposed to have been a species of kangaroo.

When these phenomena were first discovered, so much incredulity was manifested, that the greatest care was required in investigating them, and many elaborate arguments were expended before scientific men would be convinced of their genuineness. After satisfactorily ascertaining that the tracks were those of a biped, an eminent zoologist demonstrated that they could only have been made by a bird. The bird, it was then said, must have been one of the *Grallæ*, or Waders; and during a dry summer, Professor Hitchcock saw similar marks on the muddy bed of the river, where it flows by the side of the quarries, made by snipes; these had been baked hard by the sun, and perfectly resembled those on the sandstone slabs.

The earliest specimens were classed as thick-toed and slender-toed; of which eleven varieties were described, under the general denomination of *Ornithichnites*, or Stony-Bird Tracks. The largest of these (*Ornithichnites giganteus*) must have belonged to a stupendous bird. It has no hinder toe, and measures fifteen inches in length, with an addition of two inches for a claw. Some idea of the prodigious size of the bird may be inferred from the length of its steps; the ordinary walking stride was four feet, which might be increased on occasion to six. A gregarious habit is supposed to be indicated by the existence of parallel tracks of four of these giants walking side by side. Another species, the *Ornithichnites ingens*, like the former, was three-toed, with a foot from fifteen to sixteen inches long, having the tarsal appendage before noticed reaching eight or nine inches backwards from the bird's heel, and which may have been similar to that now seen on bantam fowl and some species of game. The ordinary step was six feet, and the bird was so heavy, as to sink deeply into the mud at every stride. 'Indeed,' writes Professor Hitchcock, 'I hesitate not to say that the impression made on the mud appears to have been almost as deep, indicating a pressure almost as great, as if an elephant had passed over it. I could not persuade myself, until the evidence became perfectly irresistible, that I was examining merely the track of a bird.' What a variety must there have been in the gradations from this monster down to the little bird which left the smallest tracks; a foot one inch in length, and a stride of three inches!

The valley of the Connecticut appears to have been in remote times a large estuary, and it has been shown that these footmarks were made on the borders of a shallow expanse of water. The larger birds would sometimes wade into the water in search of food; and supposing the surface to remain placid, layer after layer of soft mud would be quietly deposited in the deep-sunk tracks which they left, until the whole was filled up, yet without obliterating the impression of the birds' feet. In some instances a concreting process has taken place, so that, on separating the layers of stone, a perfect *fac simile* of the foot is obtained. The very perfection of the specimens shows that they cannot have been exposed to atmospheric influences, such as would have been the case had they been formed on mud left dry by the tide. Subsequently to the filling up of the tracks, they have been sunk to a depth of some hundreds of feet, and hardened into stone. Since that period, and while the oolitic, cretaceous, and tertiary groups of rocks were being deposited, they have been upheaved to the position in which they are now found. Their discovery may be regarded as one of the most interesting pages in the physical history of the earth.

The marks have been found in a district extending more than eighty miles along the banks of the Connecticut river; they include fourteen new species, among which some, from their resemblance to the tracks of saurians, have been called *Sauridichnites*. Fossils are, however, abundant in other parts of the American continent. The state of Ohio is rich in specimens, both animal and vegetable; among the latter, the date, bamboo, and bread-fruit tree, besides others indigenous to the country, have been found at a depth of four hundred feet below the surface, in many instances with the most fragile and delicate leaves uninjured. The great Pittsburg coal seam, which covers an area of 14,000 square miles, abounds also in fossil plants; tracks resembling those of the cheirotherium, dog, and some species of reptiles, have been found in it. Of these no satisfactory explanation has yet been given, but some consider that we thus possess proof that reptiles and

fishes were not the only air-breathing animals in existence at the time that the forests of sigillaria and lepidodendra were growing.

Fossil footmarks have also been met with in England, Scotland, Saxony, and various parts of Europe. In 1824, some specimens were dug up in Cheshire, but remained undescribed until the discovery of others in a quarry at Storeton, near Liverpool, in 1838. The miners, when the slabs were first laid bare, supposed them to be impressions of a human hand, to which they bear a great resemblance, and from which circumstance the animal to which they belong has been named the *Cheirotherium*. By the labours of Professor Owen, this animal has been made out to be a species of reptile allied to the frog and salamander, but with very great inequality in the extremities—the hind-foot measuring twelve inches in length, and the fore-foot not more than four inches. The name now given to it, from the structure of its teeth, is *Labyrinthodon*. Slabs and casts of its footmarks, and of those of birds, are exhibited among the other interesting specimens in the geological gallery of the British Museum. Other tracks as well as those of the *Cheirotherium* have been found in the Storeton quarries. According to a paper read before the Geological Society, 'many large slabs are crowded with casts in relief, some of which are supposed to have been derived from the feet of saurian reptiles, and others from those of tortoises. Occasionally, the webs between the toes can be distinctly traced. It is impossible to look at these slabs and not conclude that the clay beds on which they rested must have been traversed by multitudes of animals, and in every variety of direction.' Some further researches, made in the same quarries during the past year, have brought to light the footprints of birds, from a small size up to two and a half inches in length. Mr Cunningham, the discoverer, observes in his description—'The feet had three toes; the intermediate space between two impressions is ten inches; and, so far as they go, the impressions are right and left. There can, I think, be no doubt of the animal that produced them having been a bird, and probably one of the *Gallina*. . . . This discovery I consider important, as proving beyond a doubt the existence of warm-blooded animals in this country during the period of the deposit of the new red sandstone. I have long looked for something of the kind, and am now hoping to discover some of the large *Ornithichnites*.' Across other slabs found in the same district runs a grooved mark, as though formed by the tail of an animal trailing on soft mud: some were covered with a network of cracks, and dotted with rain drops. 'These appearances go to prove, that if some of the tracks have been formed under water, others have been exposed at repeated intervals to the hardening effects of the sun, and the further deposition of silt by water, which has thus produced a succession of layers.'

Footprints have been seen also in the sandstone of Shropshire; and in the south, near Hastings, tracks sixteen inches in length, supposed to be those of a bird, occur in the hardened beds of sand. Every new discovery has helped to dispel the scepticism with which the original supposition was received, as to the tracks being those of warm-blooded animals. The advocates of a particular theory contended that the prodigious impressions in the sandstone of the valley of the Connecticut were those of some hitherto unknown saurian with trifid feet. Mr Lyell's recent visit to America has, however, set the question at rest. In company with Professor Hitchcock, he went to examine the footprints, and writes—'The waters of the Connecticut being low, I had an opportunity of seeing a ledge of rock of red shale laid bare, on which were imprinted a single line of nine footprints of *Ornithichnites giganteus*, turning alternately right and left, and separated from each other by intervals of about five feet. At one spot there was a space, several yards square, where the entire surface of the shale was irregular and jagged, owing to the number of footsteps, not one of which could be traced

distinctly, as when a flock of sheep have passed over a muddy road; but on withdrawing from this area, the confusion gradually ceased, and the tracks became more and more distinct. The professor informed me, that since he first announced his belief, in 1836, that these impressions were referable to birds, he had observed above two thousand footprints, probably made by nearly thirty distinct species, all indented on the upper surface of the strata, and only exhibiting casts in relief on the under side of the beds resting on such indented surfaces.'

While travelling in Georgia, Mr Lyell had seen the process by which the recent footprints of animals—racoons and opossums—were preserved on the sea-shore, by the drifting in of fine-blown sand, which, under pressure, would have concreted into a hard mass. And after viewing the tracks in the quarries on the Connecticut, the secret of their formation was revealed to him on the shores of the Bay of Fundy. 'When I arrived in this region,' he tells us, 'it was the period of the lowest or neap tides, so that large areas, where the red mud had been deposited, were laid dry, and in some spots had been baking in a hot sun for ten days. The upper part of the mud had thus become hard for a depth of several inches, and in its consolidated form exactly resembled, both in colour and appearance, some of the red marls of the new red sandstone formation of Europe. The upper surface was usually smooth, but in some places I saw it pitted over with small cavities, which I was told were due to a shower of rain which fell eight or ten days before, when the deposit was still soft. It perfectly recalled to my mind those "fossil showers" of which the markings are preserved in some ancient rocks, and the origin of which was first correctly explained to an incredulous public by Dr Buckland in 1838. . . . I saw several other examples during my tour of similar phenomena, particularly in a bright red deposit of mud thrown down at the mouth of the Patapsco, at Baltimore, of which I was able to bring away some consolidated layers.' But the muddy shores of the bay were marked with the more interesting tracks of annelides and of birds, the latter 'in regular sequence, faithfully representing in their general appearance the smaller class of *Ornithichnites* of high antiquity in the valley of the Connecticut. These recent footprints,' continues Mr Lyell, 'were those of the sandpiper, a species common to Europe and North America, flights of which I saw daily running along the water's edge, and often leaving thirty or more similar impressions in a straight line, parallel to the borders of the estuary. The red mud had cracked in hardening in the sun's heat, and was divided into compartments, as we see clay at the bottom of a dried pond, and I was able to bring away some pieces to England.' The markings on some of these pieces, which have been deposited in the British Museum, are most perfect, and fully exemplify the mode in which the ancient fossil *Ornithichnites* were formed.

Various opinions have been expressed as to the size and height of the birds whose feet left impressions so enormous. The African ostrich is the largest bird known at the present day: its height is from seven to nine feet, weight eighty to one hundred pounds, and the total length of the foot ten inches. Reasoning from analogy, the conclusion is, that the *Ornithichnites giganteus* and *ingens* were double the height and size of the ostrich. A bird of this gigantic stature, rivaling our camelopard in height, would be a fitting companion for the enormous quadrupeds which existed contemporaneously on the earth! At the first thought, such things appear beyond the bounds of probability; but nature herself has furnished evidence in their favour by the fossil bones recently exhumed in New Zealand. Mr Owen, in a communication to the Zoological Society on these interesting remains, gives the name of *Dinornis*, or 'Surprising Bird,' to the animal to which they belonged. The largest of this species, *Dinornis giganteus*, when living, was ten feet six inches in height; and another, the *Dinornis struthoides*, equalled the modern ostrich in

size. The footprints of the *dinornis* were of the trifid character, as described of the American *Ornithichnites*: the dimensions of the feet were in some instances similar; the natural consequence is, that there is no longer any room for scepticism as to the true character of fossil footmarks in the Connecticut sandstones.

In 1844, subsequently to Mr Lyell's visit to America, other specimens of footmarks were found at Turner's Falls, in Massachusetts. They were impressed on glossy shales imbedded in sandstone. One of the slabs contained above one hundred tracks made by four or five varieties of birds: it was besides pitted all over with fossilised rain drops. The claws, joints, and integuments were clearly exhibited. Some of the prints were made by a short, heavy bird; others, of a smaller size, with a longer stride, were supposed to be those of a wader similar to the heron; others again showed a foot six inches in length and width, and a stride of twenty-nine inches. The bird to which the latter belonged must have been of great weight, as the bed of mud was depressed to a considerable depth.

Any remaining doubt as to the tracks being those of birds was removed, by the discovery at the same time of coprolites, or the fossilised excreta of those animals, in hard calcareous rock in the same district. The place where these were met with had evidently been much resorted to by the birds, as shown by their numerous tracks. In the midst of them were found a few egg-shaped flattened bodies, about an inch in diameter and two inches long, of a dark colour, and considerably softer than the enclosing rock, which is very hard and compact. When broken crosswise, they usually exhibit a more or less perfect concentric arrangement, and are sometimes a little convoluted. They adhere so strongly to the rock, that their precise external appearance has not been determined. In the inside of this mass small black grains may be seen resembling small seeds, the black matter of which is carbonaceous. When this is burned off, the remainder of the fossil has been found, on analysing it, to consist of phosphate and carbonate of lime. It is supposed that the black grains are seeds which have passed undigested through the intestines, and have assumed in the passage such positions as these foreign bodies would, and often do, in the feces.

A remarkable and beautiful result has been obtained by the application of the power of chemical analysis to these fragments. These are found to contain uric acid in the proportion of about one-half per cent; and from the circumstances under which it occurs, it is concluded that the coprolite must have been dropped by a bird rather than any other animal. It also appears that the animal was in all probability omnivorous—a conclusion suggested by the analysis of the coprolite, and confirmed by the probable presence of seeds, as above alluded to.*

The high importance of the study of fossils as a means of throwing light on the early history of our planet is clearly shown by the facts brought forward in the foregoing account. We may conclude in Professor Ansted's words:—It is strange that in a thin bed of fine clay, occurring between two masses of sandstone, we should thus have convincing, but unexpected evidence, preserved concerning some of the earth's inhabitants at this early period. The ripple mark, the worm track, the scratchings of a small crab on the sand, and even the impression of the rain drop, so distinct as to indicate the direction of the wind at the time of the shower—these, and the footprints of the bird, are all stereotyped, and offer an evidence which no argument can gainsay, no prejudice resist, concerning the natural history of a very ancient period. But the waves that made that ripple mark have long ceased to wash those shores; for ages has the surface then exposed been concealed under great thicknesses of strata; the worm and the crab have left no solid fragment to speak to their form or structure; the bird has left no bone that has yet

been discovered; the fragments of the reptile are small, imperfect, and extremely rare. Still, enough is known to determine the fact; and that fact is the more interesting and valuable from the very circumstances under which it is presented.*

A NIGHT AT HOME.

BY LEITCH RITCHIE.

WHEN I was still only on the threshold of manhood, I found myself a unit in the mighty population of London, and it is hardly possible to convey an adequate idea of the loneliness of my condition. In a desert island one may be solitary enough, but the feeling of solitude cannot always be present; whereas in London, even the measureless and endless crowd which the provincial sees whirling around him, is a constant remembrancer that he is *alone*—

* Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on the wide, wide sea."

When little more than a boy, I had said to my mother, with the hero of many a fairy tale, 'Mother, bake me a bannock, and roast me a collop, and I will go and push my fortune!' And my mother, who never could refuse me anything, and who, besides, had a strong notion that the Metropolis was the best field for such preternatural talents as mine, had readily, though tearfully, complied. I was, then, in London, without a friend, without an acquaintance, without a prospect; and (my resultless letters of introduction being all delivered) I felt sometimes as if I were a shadow moving among substantial forms, and sometimes as if the world around me, and all that it inherit, were but the phantasmagoria of a dream.

One day, when going into my lodgings, I found that a hackney-coach had stopped at the door, and I looked with languid curiosity into the window of the vehicle. The passengers were an elderly lady and gentleman, and a young woman, apparently their daughter; and I observed them with the more attention, that I thought I heard them pronounce my name as they gave a packet to the coachman to deliver at the house. Not that I thought it was really my name—that was impossible; for although I sometimes received letters by the post, the post is not one of the persons of society like people who come in hackney-coaches, and I was known in the house only as the young gentleman in the two pair. But the surprising coincidence of the sound resembling my own name made me look fixedly at those who pronounced the word; and in fact I continued to look—and to see what I looked at too—long after the hackney-coach had disappeared.

It was the young woman who had chiefly arrested my attention; and the circumstance was owing to her appearing in the likeness of an ideal being that had haunted me for years. I thought I knew her, just as one frequently recognises a scene beheld for the first time as something already garnered in his memory. It is usual to talk of such matters as 'recollections of a former state of existence,' but my perceptions were not of so dreamy a nature. The young woman was a piece of flesh and blood, belonging exclusively to this present world—and so was I; and besides, it turned out that she had actually brought me a packet from my mother, a service which as yet had been rendered me only by the post.

To some persons it will seem ridiculous that my thoughts continued from that moment to dwell upon the young woman; but the fact is, the phantoms of my imagination resolved into her, and she became like a religious image in whose material form men worship ideas of beauty and holiness. I was just in that state of solitude which is favourable to such superstitions;

and so conscious was I withal, that I never could bring myself to ask my mother a direct question about the bearers of her packet.

My mother, on her part, gave herself no trouble to understand the hints with which I coasted round the delicate subject, for indeed she had other and far more pressing calls upon her ingenuity. The affairs of our family had been going back for some years, ever since my father's death, and our moderate property was much diminished by litigation. The few freehold acres, however, on which our unpretending, but genteel and comfortable house was built, were still entire; and these we determined to preserve to perpetuity; and in order that we might do so more conveniently, to grant some building leases if we could find tenants. All these matters were discussed at full in my mother's letters; but, to say the truth, I found them neither very interesting nor very intelligible. All I knew was, that I was to make a fortune somehow or other for myself; that my paternal acres were to be multiplied threefold; and that I was to meet again the lady of the hackney-coach. This was clear enough, although I sometimes wondered how it was to begin to come about; and so I went on dreaming, and castle building, and growing more and more solitary every day, till at length I was recalled home, for the purpose of commencing in Scotland—under the auspices of some relations, since I could not manage it myself—the serious business of life.

I left London without regret. The young woman was but an idea, and that was easily transported. The Egeria of the two pair could haunt me as well in the north as in the south; nay, much better in a room trellised with woodbine, and looking over a romantic river, than in a bare brick box, staring for ever and ever with its dead eyes at other bare brick boxes staring at it.

A journey like mine was no trifle at that epoch, especially to one who travelled, for the sake of economy, night and day on the top of the coach; and by the time we had completed two-thirds of the last hundred miles, I had some doubt as to whether I should ever recover the use of my cold cramped limbs. We were now resting for breakfast at an inn which was only thirty miles in a straight line from the place for which I was bound; but the distance was still greater to the town where the coach stopped, and where I should require to pass the night, if I completed my journey by the vehicle. It occurred to me that a walk of thirty miles, which I had never considered a hardship, would, under present circumstances, be a blessed relief; and I pleased myself likewise with picturing the joyful surprise my sudden appearance would give my mother, who did not expect me till the following day. Having made the necessary arrangements, therefore, with the coachman about my luggage, I bade adieu to my fellow-travellers without regret, and striking into a by-road, commenced my solitary journey.

It was some time before I recovered the free use of my limbs; but the morning was fine, and the air bracing, and by and by I felt a sensation of enjoyment to which I had long been a stranger. The road led through a finely-varied country, where hill and valley, woods and waters, were intermingled in endless succession. It was quite a field-day for a dreamer like me; for in such circumstances the thoughts receive an unconscious impulse from the scenery, and assume new forms and colours with the changes of nature. I felt this when the finer part of the route terminated in an extensive moor, for gradually the *couleur de rose* which had tinted my imagination faded away into the sombre hue of the desert. The secret perhaps was, that I was tired. For more than a year, my only exercise had been in street rambling; and the heights and hollows of this mountain path, after a few hours' stout walking, tried me severely. Then it came on to rain; and being without the slightest shelter on the moor, I was soon wet to the skin. This would have been a trifle; but as it was necessary, whether wet or dry, to rest, I sat down after the rain was over; and at length got up, stiff, shiver-

ing, lame, and faint. The fact was now obvious: the unaccustomed journey had been too much for me—I was unwell; and instead of having to wander on, for a dozen miles more, over a wild and dreary road, I felt that it would be better if I could say to my mother—

'Oh mother, mother, mak' my bed soon,
For I'm sick at the heart, and fain would lie down.'

I was now tempted to commit what I ought to have known to be a folly. I determined, after receiving some information at a hut, to forsake the road, and take a short cut to my destination. How terribly long these short cuts always are! Before I reached the end of mine, I was ready to sink from fatigue; and indeed, if it had not happened that the last few miles led over familiar ground, I must unquestionably have made the heath my bed, 'with the bracken curtain for my head,' for darkly and sternly the night came down upon my solitary path. But I now knew every inch of the ground; and I could have named every height and hollow of the hills as their outline was dimly visible against the dull sky behind. So I stumbled on painfully, but surely; and at length recognised those well-known chimneys which, to a stranger, would have appeared but a filmy spot upon the night.

I was at length at the door. I knocked—louder—louder: no answer. After listening for a few moments, I was beset by a mystic terror: was my mother dead? But presently I recollected that I was not expected home that night, and that it was now past the hour of her going to bed; and as I knew that my wild fancies were the effect of fever, my fear assumed a new direction. If I could but get in without awaking her! A night's rest, I was sure, would recover me; and in the morning my mother would really have the joyful surprise I had pictured, and not be horrified, as she would be to-night, by the sight of her only son, weak, ghastly, and hardly able to speak. I coasted round to the lattice of my own apartment, holding by the wall for support. It was unbolted. I was able to open it; and joy giving me a momentary strength, I crept into the room, and groping my way, went to bed.

As I felt myself sink upon the soft pillow—in my own house, and with my mother in the next room—a sweet feeling of satisfaction stole over my senses, which seemed to still the throbbing of my temples; and my imagination, with one parting whirl—which comprehended the young woman, and the two pair, and con-founded them with present persons and localities—was just about to yield to the influence of sleep, when a circumstance occurred that made me doubt whether I was still awake. Whether I saw the door open, or felt it, I cannot tell; but I knew that it opened, and that the appearance of a human being entered, slowly and noiselessly, and approached the bed. It was now standing between me and the window; and I could see by the outline, and some details of the figure, that it was that of a man or boy, in a long dress, reaching to the feet. It looked at me intently; it bent over my face, as if to observe my features, and then, without uttering a word, it disappeared by the window.

This strange apparition, whether real or unreal, spoiled all. What I wanted was rest—rest of body and mind; and now my imagination, instead of yielding to sleep, aroused itself with a morbid energy which made me tremble for my senses. I thought the figure I had seen was myself. Owing either to the imprisoned moon having obtained more power, or simply to my eyes having become accustomed to the gloom of the apartment, I had been able to detect—or now supposed I had done so—a resemblance in age, and figure, and even in the dim features that had bent above mine. This, I thought, was my 'Double'—for I had read of such things—and that it had gone forth to visit the premises, and greet the old familiar places. Nay, as a faint sound now and then met my ear, I fancied that I was conscious of what it saw and felt; and when a low whine proved that it had reached the dog-kennel, I

passed my old favourite as he licked my hand, and praised the instinct by which, after so great a lapse of time, he had known my footstep in the dark.

There came, however, with this fancy a not less strange suspicion that it was untrue; for in fact my burning skin and throbbing temples gave a terrible reality to my condition. But presently the veil that concealed the world of shadows appeared to be entirely rent away, and the 'Double' was a mere commonplace fact in comparison with the extravagances that followed. As for myself, I rocked like a pendulum between two distant parts of the country. One moment the noise of the wheels and voices of London was in my ears, and her phantom population floated past me; the next I knew myself to be on the spot where I really lay, but surrounded both with the living and the dead, all mocking and grinning, and laughing and sobbing, in the wildest confusion. My breath came thick; I felt as if the spectral crowd would suffocate me; I commanded them, in rage and terror, to begone; and at length, in a feeble broken voice, I called for help. At that moment my delirium was at its height.

'I come!' cried a voice from without; and at the word a hushing sound ran round the room, and as a small faint light appeared at the door, the phantoms that had haunted me disappeared like morning mists before the sun. It was of course the young woman of the hackney-coach. Shading with her hand the tiny taper she carried, she looked towards the bed where I lay shrouded in darkness, and I saw that a faint cold smile illumined her face, 'like moonlight on a marble statue.' Her complexion was startlingly pale, and yet her hair as black as night, and the contrast conferred upon features that were chiselled in the most exquisite Grecian mould a fitting character of preternatural beauty. She advanced a step, and then, seeming to hesitate, set down the taper on a table in the corner of the room behind the door, and glided slowly towards the bed, her footfall giving no more sound than a moonbeam.

As she came nearer and nearer, my eyes closed involuntarily; and when she sat down by the bedside, I felt a faintness steal over me, that was like the parting of soul and body. But the next moment she took my hand in hers, and the touch of her cool fingers sent a thrill to my bosom which recalled me from death.

'You have been far away!' said she in a low voice, while the words seemed to drop in liquid melody upon my heart. 'But you have now come back: you are in your own bed, in your own house, and with none near you but those to whom you are dear—oh, how dear! Will you promise never to go away again?'

My soul promised; but my lips, although they moved, were mute. The fountain of sound seemed dried up within me; my mouth was parched by the fever that burned in my veins; and I could not have uttered a word if a dagger had been pointed at my throat.

'You know how your mother loves you,' continued she: 'you know how I love you; you know how Ponto loves you—poor dog, I heard him whine a little while ago! He was dreaming that he licked his master's hand. Will you promise never to go away again?'

I made a mighty effort to speak; but I only shook the bed with the convulsion.

'Alas!' said she, 'you will not answer. You do not even comprehend me—unhappy girl that I am!' And I felt some warm soft drops fall upon my hand, which she still held within hers.

It would be vain to attempt to describe my sensations. I was cunning, however, in the midst of my happiness, for I was not mad enough to refrain from at least doubting its reality; and when by and by I could have spoken, I would not hazard a word, lest the sound of my own voice should dissipate the blessed illusion. For the same reason I did not dare to press her hand, even when my fingers became strong enough to do so; for I would not feel that it was unsubstantial. All I desired was to lie there and thus for ever and ever.

But at length the exorcised spectres returned one by one. First came the mother, slowly and noiselessly, and gliding up to the bed, she subsided like a cloud into a chair on the side opposite her daughter, and stared at me. Then came the father in the same fashion, and he planted himself upright at the foot, and stared at me too; and they both stared at me, as I could feel (for there was not light enough to see), with dull and marble eyes. I was troubled by the gaze. It disturbed the sacredness of my communion with her, and it likewise gave me, fevered as I was, an increasing suspicion of the unreality of the whole scene. What could bring this tribe of London people to our Scottish home? Would it not be more natural for my mother, who was only in the next room—

And my mother answered to the summons. The idea had hardly been formed in my spirit-compelling brain, when the door again opened, and she glided into the room.

'What are you gathered about the bed for?' said she in a low voice.

'Hush! hush! hush!' replied the watchers: 'he is come back!'

'I know it.'

'He is asleep.'

'I know it; but how do you?'

'See! see! see!' said the phantoms.

'See! There is nothing there: surely alarm has turned your brains!'

'He is in this bed, but we must not disturb him with the light.'

'God be with us!' cried my mother; 'what a tale is this?' And at the holy name they all started up, and I expected to hear the 'whirr' of their departure.

'It is not ten minutes,' continued she, 'since I heard Ponto whine, as if caressing some one; and throwing open the lattice, I looked out, and with mingled joy and terror saw the wanderer returned. Poor lad! he would come in; and seeing that my opposition only fretted him, I yielded, put him to bed, and leaving him fast asleep, came here to tell you.' At this recital I felt one of the sudden changes of delirium, and could hardly hold from laughing at the idea of my mother being deceived by my 'Double.' But the effect upon my strange visitors was very different.

'Merciful Providence!' cried the elder lady; 'I fear there is a trial preparing for you. Since it is true that such appearances do come, they can never come in vain. Unhappy woman, it is a wraith you have seen!'

'Silence, wife!' interposed the old gentleman. 'Our kind friend has an excuse for her delusion in the natural feelings—she saw with her eyes only what her heart looked for: but your idea is sheer nonsense.'

'You all appear to me to want an excuse,' said my mother. 'Tell me, my sweet Isabel—who who never forget anything but self, and never misapprehend anything but your own goodness of nature—tell me what is the meaning of this extraordinary scene?'

'I can only say,' said Isabel, in a voice that seemed still more rich and soft when heard after other voices—

'I can only say that he returned not long ago; that I watched him into his room; that I followed instantly, and sat down by his bedside; and that he is now lying asleep before us, with his hand in mine, and his thick irregular breathing, the effects of his harassing journey, only too audible.'

'Then God help us all, and save our wits! for there is nothing more certain in this world than that I have just left him asleep as you describe, and that I had some difficulty in extricating my hand from his to come away without awaking him.'

'Stop, madam!' cried the old gentleman, as my mother was about to run to the corner of the room for the taper—'Did you expect your son to-night?'

'No, not till to-morrow. It is physically impossible that he can arrive before the middle of the day to-morrow.'

'Then the mystery is explained: it was your own son you put to bed—not mine!'

Here was an explanation indeed; but one that was far beyond the reach of my poor fevered brain. It appeared that it was not I who was lying in the bed before them, but somebody else! If I was not myself, who was I? I would thank them to tell me that, or else leave me alone with Isabel. It was dreadful to be lonely at all. I would go back to London. I was in London. It was at me the brick boxes stared with their dead eyes, and no longer at one another. They turned as I turned; they followed as I flew; they surrounded me everywhere; everywhere I could see the mass extending back to an immeasurable distance: and all staring, staring, staring at me. Their myriad cries were in my ears; but the intonation was lost in the roar of carriage wheels, and it was some time before I could understand what they said: till at length their united voice, compelling, as it were, all other sounds to join it, the whole staring world cried out—'Who are you?—who are you?—who are you?' Suddenly a shrill scream penetrated through the mass of sound, which at once died away in the 'hush' I had before heard running round the apartment; and in a moment my senses rallied, and by the light of the taper, which some one now held above my face, I saw my mother bending over me. 'My son, my son!' she cried; 'what a heart have I that did not tell me it was you!'

'Mother, what is this? Tell me where I am? Am I not in our own house?'

'You are—but not in the house. Do you not remember the building lease? This is the new dwelling that was built while you were away, close to ours, and uniform with it. But you are ill, feverish, faint. Not a word more to-night; but try to sleep. I see it all without explanation: you came in by the window, as you often used to do; and our tenant's son, a most amiable lad, but alas! of weak intellect, who had strayed away from his distracted friends!'

'Who are they?' said I pointing, and feeling myself again begin to wander.

'They are his father and mother. Do you not remember their delivering a packet to you in London?'

'But there was another here: where is she? I heard her name: it was Isabel. I cannot see her—I must see her.'

'And so indeed you will, every day. She is even now preparing your medicine. She will be a sister to you, my own Ronald—a sister worthy of the name—as she is to her poor unhappy brother. And you must love her—you must be sure to love her. Will you promise?'

This time my effort to reply to the question succeeded; and murmuring 'I will!' I sank into insensibility.

It has often occurred to me, that if the above circumstances had not been explained, they would have formed good grounds for the conversion of the whole party to a superstition that has now passed away. But in reality there was nothing strange even in the coincidence of the poor young man entering the room about the same time with myself, for it was at the usual hour of his going to bed. He had frequently wandered away from his friends; but this time his absence had been so long, as to throw them all into alarm, and almost despair. Their journey to London was entirely on his account; but after many consultations, they gave up hopes of his recovery, and brought him back to Scotland. There he lived a harmless and perhaps happy life for three years after the strange interview I have described; and then, to the surprise and horror of his friends, his dead body was one day found in the river.

And what became of Isabel? Did I redeem my promise to love her? Were we married? Alas! alas! these questions could be easily disposed of in romance; but in a narrative of real life, they are of a kind which can rarely be answered without pain. I will not answer

them at all. Suffice it, that the 'serious business' I intended to commence in Scotland turned out, for two or three years' trial, a joke; and that I returned, in pursuance of my destiny, to the brick boxes of London.

RISE IN THE WORLD.

At an entertainment lately given at Merthyr, in Wales, Mr Crawshaw, one of the most influential ironmasters of the principality, gave the following graphic account of the rise and progress of his family, and of the gradual rise of the iron trade in Wales:—'My grandfather was the son of a respectable farmer at Normanton, in the county of York. At the age of fifteen, father and son differed; my grandfather could not agree with his father—the reasons are unknown to me—and my grandfather, an enterprising boy, left Normanton for London, and rode his own pony up. When he got to London, which in those days was an arduous task of some fifteen or twenty days' travelling, he found himself as destitute of friends as he possibly could be. He sold his pony for £1.5, and during the time that the proceeds of the pony kept him, he found employment in an iron warehouse, kept by Mr Bicklewith. He hired himself for three years for £1.5, the price of his pony. His occupation was to clean the counting-house, to put the desks in order for his master and the clerks, and to do anything else that he was told to do. By industry, integrity, and perseverance, he gained his master's favour, and in the course of a few months he was considered decidedly better than the boy who had been there before him. He was termed "the Yorkshire boy;" and the Yorkshire boy, gentlemen, progressed in his master's favour by his activity, integrity, and perseverance. He had a very amiable and good master, and at the end of a very short period, before he had been two years in his place, he stood high in his master's confidence. The trade in which he was engaged was only a cast-iron warehouse, and his master assigned to him, "the Yorkshire boy," the privilege of selling flat-irons, the things with which our shirts and clothes are flattened. The washerwomen of London were sharp folks, and when they bought one flat-iron, they stole two. Mr Bicklewith thought the best person to cope with them would be a person working for his own interest, and a Yorkshireman at the same time. My grandfather sold those articles, and that was the first matter of trading that ever he embarked in in his life. By honesty and perseverance, he continued to grow in his master's favour, who, being an indolent man, in a few years retired, and left my grandfather in possession of the cast-iron business in London. That business was carried on on the very site where I now spend my days, in Yorkyard, London. Various vicissitudes in trade took place in the course of time. My grandfather left his business in London and came down here, and my father, who carried it on, supplied him with money almost as fast as he spent it here, but not quite so fast; and it is there I spend my time, engaged in selling the produce of this country; and you know to what an extent the iron produce of this country has risen up. My grandfather established the ironworks at Merthyr and Cyfartha; but my father was not left the whole of the Cyfartha establishment—he was only left three-eighths of it, but by purchase he obtained the whole of it, and by his benevolence I have succeeded to it. During my time the concern has not, and I hope it never will be, diminished. From what I have mentioned, it will be seen by the rising generation that by industry, integrity, and perseverance, wealth and rank may be attained, even although starting from humble circumstances; at all events, any young man who is industrious, honest, and persevering, will certainly be respected in any class of life he may chance to move in.'

IMPROVEMENT IN TOASTS.

On the subject of toasts at public entertainments, the following observations occur in the Literary Gazette:—

'What strikes us on all these "re-unions" is, that it so rarely happens that the services of the greatest benefactors of mankind are recognised. The science which improves every moment of man's civilised existence, and the literature which refines, elevates, and adorns it, are as if they were not. The little immediate is felt and panegyrised, the mighty universal has no grateful eulogy. The material is far ahead of the intellectual in the national mind. The army and navy—they fight for us, and, like cowards or

women, we never fail to thank them for getting their heads broken and saving ours. The church prays for us, and we are a professing religious people, who even over our cups must remember the good offices of the clergy. If any members of government, or any eminent lawyers, are present, we drink them fearfully, the former for not taxing us more, and the latter for not hanging us. But the illustrious historian, the immortal poet, the wonderful inventor of gas, or steam, or superhuman machinery, the pure teacher of morals, the great philosopher, the glorious sculptor or painter—the brightest luminaries of their own time, and the lights of future ages till time shall be no more—nobody ever dreams of toasting them or their works. Why should not science, or literature, or the arts be standing toasts among intelligent persons? The periodical press does now and then (as we have noted in this instance) win the compliment; but this seems to be simply because it is the most practical and least exalted of any branch of letters. Yet it is potential as well as forthwith applicable, and therefore it is "soft-sawdered." It can give a good turn or a buffet within a few hours, and therefore is its tongue hallowed, and its operators propitiated. Far be it from us to say that such unctuous honours are not due to it; the wielders of the pen are in anyway equal to the wielders of the sword, and the influence of the periodical press is enormous in all things, be they small or great—a street row, or a national quarrel, a vestry or general election, the stability of a police constable, or the popularity of a prime minister. It is the mysterious *we* that commands awe and glorification; though the "*we*," in many cases (far removed from that in question), may be an ignorant blockhead or an impertinent pretender. After all, the query is—Among a people boasting so much of their intellectual progress, why should not science, literature, and the fine arts take their place as standing toasts at our public and national entertainments?

We would add—Is not the whole system of toasts ridiculous? The noisy demonstrations on such occasions are significant of anything but good taste or advanced intelligence.

INDIAN SUPERSTITION.

In illustration of the belief of the [Canadian] Indians in a special Providence, the following story may be worth telling. Some three or four years ago, a party of Saulteaux, being much pressed by hunger, were anxious to cross from the mainland to one of their fishing stations, an island about twenty miles distant; but it was nearly as dangerous to go as to remain, for the spring had just reached that critical point when there was neither open water nor trustworthy ice. A council being held, to weigh the respective chances of drowning and starving, all the speakers opposed the contemplated move, till an old man of considerable influence thus spoke:—"You know, my friends, that the Great Spirit gave one of our squaws a child yesterday. Now, he cannot have sent it into the world to take it away again directly; and I would therefore recommend our carrying the child with us, and keeping close to it, as the assurance of our own safety." In full reliance on this reasoning, nearly the whole band immediately committed themselves to the treacherous ice; and they all perished miserably, to the number of eight-and-twenty.—*Sir George Simpson's Journey.*

ADVICE TO WIVES.

A wife must learn how to form her husband's happiness; in what direction the secret of his comfort lies; she must not cherish his weaknesses by working upon them; she must not rashly run counter to his prejudices. Her motto must be, never to irritate. She must study never to draw largely upon the small stock of patience in man's nature, nor to increase his obstinacy by trying to drive him; never, if possible, to have scenes. I doubt much if a real quarrel, even if made up, does not loosen the bond between man and wife, and sometimes, unless the affection of both be very sincere, lastingly. If irritation should occur, a woman must expect to hear from most men a strength and vehemence of language far more than the occasion requires. Mild as well as stern men are prone to this exaggeration of language; let not a woman be tempted ever to say anything sarcastic or violent in retaliation. The bitterest repentance must needs follow such an indulgence, if she do. Men frequently forget what they have themselves said, but seldom what is uttered by their wives. They are grateful,

too, for forbearance in such cases; for, whilst asserting most loudly that they are right, they are often conscious that they are wrong. Give a little time, as the greatest boon you can bestow, to the irritated feelings of your husband.—*The English Matron.*

USELESS FANCIES.

Having searched into all kinds of science, we discover the folly of neglecting those things which concern human life, and involving ourselves in difficulties about questions that are but mere notions; we should confine ourselves to nature and reason. Fancies beyond the reach of understanding, and which have yet been made the objects of all the disputes, errors, and superstitions that have prevailed in the world—such notional mysteries cannot be made subservient to the right uses of humanity.—*Socrates.*

CHAMBERS'S INFORMATION FOR THE PEOPLE, A NEW AND IMPROVED EDITION, IN A HUNDRED NUMBERS, AT THREE-HALF-PENCE EACH.

TEN years have now elapsed since the publication of the '*INFORMATION FOR THE PEOPLE*,' and so great have been the advances in various departments of knowledge during that period, that a new edition of the work, embracing numerous discoveries and improvements, seems eminently desirable. Impressed with this consideration, and desirous of rendering the work still more deserving of the reputation it has been so fortunate as to attain, we propose, on Saturday the 4th of December, to commence the issue of a new and revised edition.

To those who are not acquainted with the work, it may be necessary to offer a few explanations. Designed in an especial manner for the People, though adapted for all classes, it comprises those subjects on which information is of the most importance; such as the more interesting branches of science—physical, mathematical, and moral; natural history, political history, geography, and literature; together with a few miscellaneous papers, which seemed to be called for by peculiar circumstances affecting the British people. Thus everything is given that is requisite for a *generally well-informed man* in the less highly educated portions of society; and nothing omitted appertaining to intellectual cultivation, but subjects of professional or local interest. It will be understood, then, that the '*INFORMATION FOR THE PEOPLE*' is not an encyclopedia in the most comprehensive meaning of the word, but rather a cyclopædia embracing only the more important departments of general knowledge. The ruling object, indeed, has been to afford the means of *self-education*, and to introduce into the mind, thus liberated and expanded, a craving after still farther advancement.

Such has hitherto been the character of the '*INFORMATION FOR THE PEOPLE*.' In the new edition now to be issued, there will be some useful improvements. Subjects, the interest of which is past, will be omitted or greatly condensed, and others of a more enduring and important nature will take their place. All the scientific treatises will be carefully remodelled, and new discoveries introduced. So much new information on various matters will be added, that the work will be more encyclopædic than it has hitherto been. In the Index will be found an explanation of, or reference to, almost every subject necessary in ordinary circumstances to be known. The appearance of the work will be improved by leaving out the general title of each sheet; and whenever it appears desirable, the subjects will be illustrated by additional wood-engravings.

A sheet will appear every Saturday, price *Three-half-pence*, till the whole, extending to One Hundred Numbers, are issued. A Part, containing four numbers, stitched in a cover, will appear monthly, price *Sevenpence*. When completed, the work will form two handsome volumes, royal octavo, with engraved title-pages, price *Sixteen Shillings* bound in cloth.

W. AND R. C.

Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, High Street, Edinburgh. Also sold by D. CHAMBERS, 38 Miller Street, Glasgow; W. S. ORR, 147 Strand, London; and J. M'GLASHAN, 21 D'Olier Street, Dublin.—Printed by W. and R. CHAMBERS, Edinburgh.